

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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R 061402Z JUN 75
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9701

SECRET SOFIA 1148

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, BU
SUBJECT: CALL ON THE SECRETARY BY BULGARIAN AMBASSADOR

REF: A) SOFIA 0897; B) SOFIA 0018

1. UNDERSTAND AMBASSADOR POPOV HAS ASKED TO MAKE A TEN-MINUTE CALL ON THE SECRETARY PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR SOFIA ON LEAVE AND CONSULTATION LATER THIS MONTH.

2. IN REFTEL A I REPORTED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER MLADENOV HAD PERSONALLY REQUESTED THIS DURING HIS INTERVIEW WITH ME IN MAY BEFORE I CAME TO WASHINGTON ON CONSULTATION. MLADENOV SPOKE IN TERMS OF A PROTOCOL CALL.

3. WHILE THERE IS NO EQUIVALENCE BETWEEN MLADENOV AND SECRETARY KISSINGER, IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT SINCE MY ARRIVAL HERE IN APRIL 1974 ACCESS OF THE EMBASSY TO TOP BULGARIAN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING SOME OF HIGHER STATURE THAN THE FOREIGN MINISTER, HAS MUCH IMPROVED. IN FACT, I CAN PRESENTLY SEE JUST ABOUT ANYONE I WANT TO IN SOFIA AND AM FAVORED IN THAT RESPECT OVER MOST OF MY NATO COLLEAGUES.

4. SEEMINGLY TURNING A COLD SHOULDER ON THE BULGARIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON WOULD HAVE ADVERSE REPERCUSSIONS HERE AND WOULD BE MISUNDERSTOOD AS A POLITICAL ACT, AT A TIME WHEN BULGARIA HAS MADE A NUMBER OF STEPS IN OUR DIRECTION AND HAS REMOVED MOST OF THE IRRITANTS THAT IN THE PAST HAD

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IMPEDED RELATIONS. IN FACT, MLADENOV HAS EXTENDED AN INVITATION TO THE SECRETARY TO COME TO SOFIA, AND CONSIDERS THAT IT WAS ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE IN HELSINKI. FACT THAT WE HAVE

TURNED A DEAF EAR TO REMINDERS OF THIS RANKLES HERE, AND THIS COULD ALSO BE SMOOTHED OVER BY SHOWING MINIMUM COURTESY TO THE BULGARIAN AMBASSADOR.

5. NOR IS IT ENTIRELY IRRELEVANT THAT WE HAVE TRIPLED OUR TRADE WITH BULGARIA FROM 1973 TO 1974 AND THAT ACCORDING TO LATEST FIGURES WE ARE CURRENTLY RUNNING AT TWICE LAST YEAR'S RATE OF TRADE (ON TERMS VERY FAVORABLE TO US) IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1975.

6. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT THE SECRETARY FIND TEN MINUTES TO RECEIVE AMBASSADOR POPOV. DURING THAT INTERVIEW HE COULD (A) PROBE WHY BULGARIANS FEEL INHIBITED ABOUT CONCLUDING A TRADE AGREEMENT WITH US; (B) EXPRESS DISPLEASURE AT THE "PRIMITIVE" LEVEL OF CULTURAL EXCHANGES AND HINT THAT IF ABSENCE OF AN AGREEMENT IS THE REAL OBSTACLE, THIS MIGHT BE OVERCOME; AND (C) REFER TO THE ISPENTCHIAN CASE IF IT CONTINUES AS A PROBLEM.

7. I EMPHATICALLY DO NOT RECOMMEND THAT THE INTERVIEW BE PROLONGED BEYOND TEN MINUTES. THAT IS ALL THAT POPOV HAS ASKED, AND THAT IS ALL THAT CAN BE JUSTIFIED. NOT TO SEE HIM, HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE UNFAVORABLE EFFECTS ON OUR RELATIONS JUST AS THEY ARE MOVING IN A CONSTRUCTIVE DIRECTION.

HERZ

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